

04/25/17

Strategic Plan #1: Improved 2 way radio Communications for First Responders: VHF and 700/800 MHz

Our VHF radio system, which is the primary method of communication utilized by our first responders has some deficiencies that need to be addressed to ensure quicker, safer and more reliable responses to emergencies. I held a meeting in late 2016 with our first responder team including radio/communications design experts where we identified those deficiencies and solutions to overcome those deficiencies. These solutions will be implemented in the budget over the next 1-2 years.

We are adding a 700/800 MHz fully interoperable digital radio system that allows for seamless communication between local, state and federal agencies regardless of location for our first responders and ensures we have a fully functional back up radio communication system in place. I held a meeting with our first responder team along with radio/communications design experts in late 2016 where we discussed the effectiveness, need and solution for having two entirely separate radio systems and everyone agreed this system is the ideal solution. Both the VHF and 700/800 MHz radio systems being fully functional are absolutely critical to ensuring the safety of our first responders and citizens both every day and especially during a mass event where cell phones do not work due to the system getting overloaded and when we require coordination with regional, state or federal assets. We are primarily utilizing grant funding to accomplish this. We have already received approximately \$140,000 in grant funding to construct the first tower in Bedias and purchase the first eleven (11) of 700/800 MHz radios. We have worked hard with the Brazos Valley Council of Governments and will obtain approximately 75 additional 700/800 MHz radios at no cost to Grimes County. These radios cost up to \$3,500 each new, so this is approximately \$350,000 worth of equipment we have received at no cost to Grimes County for the equipment. Additionally, we will receive our 2nd grant to place the needed equipment on the 2nd tower, which will provide what we need to get the 700/800 MHz radio system up and running in Grimes County. The cost of subscription to this radio system will be \$23.68/month per radio.